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### **Amendments to the Claims**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

#### Listing of Claims:

1.-104. (cancelled)

105. (currently amended) An antimicrobial composite comprising [[a]] an outermost first, liquid-permeable layer and a second layer arranged on the first layer, wherein a coating of an antimicrobial metal in elemental form as such is present between the first and second layers on at least one of the surfaces of the first and second layers and substantially no antimicrobial metal in elemental form is present on exterior surfaces of the composite.

106. (previously presented) The composite of claim 105, wherein the first layer comprises a foramenous material.

107. (previously presented) The composite of claim 105, wherein the first layer comprises at least one of a hole and a mesh structure.

108. (previously presented) The composite of claim 106, wherein the first layer comprises at least one of a perforated film and a mesh.

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109. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 105, wherein the first layer comprises an organic polymer.

110. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 109, wherein the organic polymer comprises a polyolefin.

111. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 110, wherein the polyolefin comprises at least one of polyethylene and polypropylene.

112. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 105, wherein the first layer comprises a polyethylene mesh.

113. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 105, wherein the first layer comprises openings having a size of from about 250  $\mu\text{m}$  to about 1400  $\mu\text{m}$ .

114. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 112, wherein the polyethylene mesh comprises openings having a size of from about 400  $\mu\text{m}$  to about 700  $\mu\text{m}$ .

115. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 114, wherein the openings have a substantially triangular shape.

116. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 113, wherein the openings

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provide an open area of from about 15 % to about 60 % of the surface area of the first layer.

117. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 106, wherein the first layer has a thickness of from about 0.02 mm to about 0.8 mm.

118. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 107, wherein the first layer has a thickness of from about 0.05 mm to about 0.5 mm.

119. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 105, wherein the second layer is one of a liquid-permeable layer and a liquid-absorbing layer.

120. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 108, wherein the second layer comprises at least one of a perforated film and a mesh.

121. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 106, wherein the second layer comprises an organic polymer.

122. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 121, wherein the organic polymer comprises a polyolefin.

123. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 108, wherein the second layer

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comprises a polyethylene mesh.

124. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 105, wherein the second layer has a thickness of from about 0.02 mm to about 2.5 mm.

125. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 119, wherein the second layer is a liquid-absorbing layer.

126. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 125, wherein the liquid-absorbing layer has a liquid-absorbing capacity of from about 300 g/m<sup>2</sup> to about 2000 g/m<sup>2</sup>.

127. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 126, wherein the liquid-absorbing capacity is from about 400 g/m<sup>2</sup> to about 1000 g/m<sup>2</sup>.

128. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 125, wherein the second layer comprises a textile sheet.

129. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 128, wherein the textile sheet comprises at least one of a nonwoven, a fleece, a fabric, a knit and a felt.

130. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 125, wherein the second layer comprises at least one of fibers and yarns.

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131. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 129, wherein the second layer comprises at least one of viscose, polyolefin and polyester.

132. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 129, wherein the second layer comprises at least one of polyethylene and polypropylene.

133. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 125, wherein the second layer has a thickness of from about 0.3 mm to about 2.4 mm.

134. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 128, wherein the second layer has a thickness of from about 0.5 mm to about 1.4 mm.

135. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 125, wherein the second layer has an area weight of from about 80 g/m<sup>2</sup> to about 200 g/m<sup>2</sup>.

136. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 135, wherein the second layer comprises a superabsorber.

137. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 136, wherein the superabsorber comprises a polymer having recurring units derived from acrylic acid and derivatives thereof.

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138. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 137, wherein the superabsorber is present in an amount of from about 0.01 % to about 40 % by weight, based on the second layer.

139. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 105, wherein the antimicrobial metal comprises at least one of Ag, Au, Pd, Pt, Cu, Ir, Zn, Sn, Sb, Bi and alloys comprising one or more of these metals.

140. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 106, wherein the antimicrobial metal comprises Ag and alloys thereof.

141. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 105, wherein the composite has a sheet structure.

142. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 141, wherein the antimicrobial metal is present in an amount of from about 1 mg/m<sup>2</sup> to about 1 g/m<sup>2</sup>.

143. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 142, wherein the antimicrobial metal comprises at least one of Ag, Cu, Zn and an alloy of one or more of these metals.

144. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 142, wherein the antimicrobial metal comprises silver and is present in an amount of from about 10 mg/m<sup>2</sup> to about 600

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mg/m<sup>2</sup>.

145. (previously presented) The composite of claim 144, wherein the silver is present in an amount of from about 50 mg/m<sup>2</sup> to about 450 mg/m<sup>2</sup>.

146. (previously presented) The composite of claim 145, wherein the silver is present in an amount of from about 60 mg/m<sup>2</sup> to about 80 mg/m<sup>2</sup>.

147. (previously presented) The composite of claim 107, wherein the first layer has a silver coating on a surface thereof which faces the second layer.

148. (previously presented) The composite of claim 107, wherein the second layer has a silver coating on a surface thereof which faces the first layer.

149. (previously presented) The composite of claim 147, wherein an intermediate layer is arranged between the silver coating and the first layer.

150. (previously presented) The composite of claim 149, wherein the intermediate layer comprises aluminum.

151. (previously presented) The composite of claim 105, wherein the first layer is coated with aluminum on one side thereof.

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152. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 105, wherein the composite has an area weight of from about 50 g/m<sup>2</sup> to about 300 g/m<sup>2</sup>.

153. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 144, wherein the composite has an area weight of from about 80 g/m<sup>2</sup> to about 160 g/m<sup>2</sup>.

154. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 105, wherein the composite has a thickness of from about 0.4 mm to about 2.5 mm.

155. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 144, wherein the composite has a thickness of from about 0.5 mm to about 1.4 mm.

156. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 105, wherein the composite shows a peeling strength of from about 0.05 N/cm to about 1.5 N/cm.

157. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 153, wherein the composite shows a peeling strength of from about 0.15 N/cm to about 0.8 N/cm.

158. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 105, wherein the composite shows a maximum tensile strength of from about 10 N/cm to about 40 N/cm.

159. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 142, wherein the composite



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shows a 24-hour release of the antimicrobial metal of from about  $0.05 \text{ mg/m}^2$  to about  $3 \text{ mg/m}^2$ .

160. (previously presented) The composite of claim 144, wherein the composite shows a 24-hour release of the silver of from about  $0.1 \text{ mg/m}^2$  to about  $2 \text{ mg/m}^2$ .

161. (previously presented) The composite of claim 153, wherein the composite has a surface area of at least about  $0.5 \text{ cm}^2$ .

162. (previously presented) The composite of claim 161, wherein the composite has a surface area of not more than about  $1 \text{ m}^2$ .

163. (previously presented) An antimicrobial composite comprising a first, liquid-permeable layer and a second, liquid-absorbing layer on the first layer, wherein the first layer comprises a coating of elemental silver as such on a side which faces the second layer, the second layer comprises a nonwoven which comprises at least one of polyethylene, polypropylene, polyester and viscose, and wherein substantially no silver metal is present on exterior surfaces of the composite.

164. (previously presented) The composite of claim 163, wherein the first layer comprises a polyethylene mesh.

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165. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 163, wherein the first layer has a thickness of from about 0.05 mm to about 0.5 mm.

166. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 165, wherein the second layer has a thickness of from about 0.5 mm to about 1.4 mm.

167. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 164, wherein the second layer has a liquid-absorbing capacity of from about 400 g/m<sup>2</sup> to about 800 g/m<sup>2</sup>.

168. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 166, wherein the second layer has an area weight of from about 80 g/m<sup>2</sup> to about 150 g/m<sup>2</sup>.

169. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 163, wherein the silver is present in an amount of from about 50 mg/m<sup>2</sup> to about 450 mg/m<sup>2</sup>.

170. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 163, wherein an aluminum coating is arranged between the silver coating and the first layer.

171. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 163, wherein the composite has an area weight of from about 80 g/m<sup>2</sup> to about 160 g/m<sup>2</sup>.

172. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 171, wherein the composite has

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a thickness of from about 0.4 mm to about 2.5 mm.

173. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 171, wherein the composite shows a 24-hour release of silver of from about 0.1 mg/m<sup>2</sup> to about 2 mg/m<sup>2</sup>.

174. (previously presented)      A wound covering article comprising the composite of claim 105.

175. (previously presented)      A wound covering article comprising the composite of claim 163.

176. (previously presented)      The article of claim 174, which is one of a wound dressing, a compress, and a bandage.

177. (previously presented)      An antimicrobial skin care article which comprises the composite of claim 105.

178. (previously presented)      An antimicrobial skin care article which comprises the composite of claim 163.

179. (previously presented)      A diaper which comprises the composite of claim 105.

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180. (currently amended) An antimicrobial composite comprising a first, liquid-permeable layer and a second liquid-absorbing layer arranged on the first layer, wherein a layer which comprises an antimicrobial metal in elemental form as such is present between the first and second layers and substantially no antimicrobial metal in elemental form is present on exterior surfaces of the composite.

181. (previously presented) The composite of claim 180, wherein the first layer comprises a foramenous material.

182. (previously presented) The composite of claim 180, wherein the first layer comprises at least one of a hole and a mesh structure.

183. (previously presented) The composite of claim 181, wherein the first layer comprises at least one of a perforated film and a mesh.

184. (previously presented) The composite of claim 180, wherein the first layer comprises an organic polymer.

185. (previously presented) The composite of claim 184, wherein the organic polymer comprises at least one of polyethylene and polypropylene.

186. (previously presented) The composite of claim 105, wherein the first layer

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comprises openings having a size of from about 250  $\mu\text{m}$  to about 1400  $\mu\text{m}$ .

187. (previously presented) The composite of claim 181, wherein the first layer has a thickness of from about 0.02 mm to about 0.8 mm.

188. (cancelled)

189. (currently amended) The composite of claim ~~[[188]]~~ 180, wherein the second layer comprises an organic polymer.

190. (currently amended) The composite of claim ~~[[188]]~~ 180, wherein the second layer has a thickness of from about 0.02 mm to about 2.5 mm.

191. (cancelled)

192. (currently amended) The composite of claim ~~[[191]]~~ 180, wherein the liquid-absorbing layer has a liquid-absorbing capacity of from about 300  $\text{g/m}^2$  to about 2000  $\text{g/m}^2$ .

193. (currently amended) The composite of claim ~~[[191]]~~ 180, wherein the second layer comprises a textile sheet.

194. (previously presented) The composite of claim 193, wherein the second layer

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has an area weight of from about 80 g/m<sup>2</sup> to about 200 g/m<sup>2</sup>.

195. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 180, wherein the second layer comprises a superabsorber.

196. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 195, wherein the superabsorber is present in an amount of from about 0.01 % to about 40 % by weight, based on the second layer.

197. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 180, wherein the antimicrobial metal comprises at least one of Ag, Au, Pd, Pt, Cu, Ir, Zn, Sn, Sb, Bi and alloys comprising one or more of these metals.

198. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 197, wherein the antimicrobial metal comprises Ag and alloys thereof.

199. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 180, wherein the composite has a sheet structure.

200. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 199, wherein the antimicrobial metal comprises silver and is present in an amount of from about 10 mg/m<sup>2</sup> to about 600 mg/m<sup>2</sup>.

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201. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 200, wherein the silver is present in an amount of from about 60 mg/m<sup>2</sup> to about 80 mg/m<sup>2</sup>.

202. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 180, wherein the composite has an area weight of from about 50 g/m<sup>2</sup> to about 300 g/m<sup>2</sup>.

203. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 202, wherein the composite has a thickness of from about 0.4 mm to about 2.5 mm.

204. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 203, wherein the composite shows a peeling strength of from about 0.05 N/cm to about 1.5 N/cm.

205. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 203, wherein the composite shows a maximum tensile strength of from about 10 N/cm to about 40 N/cm.

206. (previously presented)      The composite of claim 108, wherein the composite shows a 24-hour release of the antimicrobial metal of from about 0.05 mg/m<sup>2</sup> to about 3 mg/m<sup>2</sup>.

207. (previously presented)      An antimicrobial composite comprising a first, liquid-permeable layer and a second, liquid-absorbing layer arranged on the first layer, wherein silver in elemental form is present between the first and second layers as a coating on at

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least a surface of the first layer and substantially no silver metal is present on exterior surfaces of the composite, and wherein the first layer comprises at least one of a hole and a mesh structure and is coated with aluminum on at least the surface thereof which is coated with silver.

208. (previously presented)      An antimicrobial composite comprising a first, liquid-permeable layer and a second layer arranged on the first layer, wherein silver in elemental form is present between the first and second layers as a coating on a surface of the first layer and substantially no silver metal is present on exterior surfaces of the composite, wherein the first layer comprises an aluminum coating under the silver coating, and wherein the first layer has a thickness of from about 0.02 mm to about 0.8 mm.

209. (new)    The composite of claim 207, wherein silver is present in an amount of from about 10 mg/m<sup>2</sup> to about 600 mg/m<sup>2</sup>.

210. (new)    The composite of claim 208, wherein silver is present in an amount of from about 50 mg/m<sup>2</sup> to about 450 mg/m<sup>2</sup>.